

Rock Art in Nevada

The Nevada Rock Art Foundation



Rock art is markings, either painted (pictographs) or engraved (petroglyphs) on the surface of rock, or geoglyphs (large figures produced by either removing the surface of the ground or alignments of stone on the surface of the ground). Rock art was made and used on every continent inhabited by human populations until writing was invented, and sometimes beyond that time.

In Nevada, native people made rock art and incorporated it into their social practices for over 10,000 years. The meaning is unknown except to the makers although people throughout time often returned to the same sites again and again to make additional rock art and continue cultural practices. The art reflects the rituals, beliefs, practices of its makers and it provides a glimpse into the world views and culture of those who created it.

Although we may not know the meaning of the markings, scientists can infer time periods of use from the artifacts found in and around the rock art, and in the images themselves demonstrating the use of nets, bows and arrows and spear throwers. Native people continued to make rock art into the historic period as can be seen on the Three of Spades.

The images portrayed in these playing cards represent a variety of styles, time periods, and geographic locations where rock art is found in Nevada. Although rock art appears durable it is actually fragile and vulnerable to the elements and to the pressures placed by the state of Nevada's burgeoning population. Vandalism, theft, and ignorant misuse are destroying the physical record of past cultural practices and the knowledge they contain. Supporting the Nevada Rock Art Foundation (NRAF) is an opportunity to help record Nevada's history through research and site protection.

For more information on Nevada's significant rock art and to join the effort to protect these resources visit:

<http://www.nvrockart.org/>

